

# **EXHIBIT L**

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## NEWS

# Lapeer County prosecutor will not prosecute Joe Gamrat

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The Lapeer County prosecutor has decided not to prosecute the husband of former state Rep. Cindy Gamrat for sending his wife and former Rep. Todd Courser anonymous text messages threatening to expose their extramarital affair.

Courser has claimed he and Gamrat were being pressured in late May through anonymous text messages to resign from office or face public revelations of their affair.

The so-called extortion plot has been at the center of one of the more bizarre political scandals in recent Michigan history that led to Gamrat's expulsion and Courser's resignation from the Michigan House on Sept. 11.

Lapeer County Prosecutor Tim Turkelson confirmed Sunday to The Detroit News that he won't charge Joe Gamrat or anyone else with any crime for their role in sending the text messages to Courser and Cindy Gamrat using a pre-paid cell phone.

"The motivation behind the text messages sent from the individuals was to assist Joe Gamrat in ending the extramarital affair," Turkelson said. "The messages therefore do not rise to the level of criminal extortion."

In a statement, Turkelson suggested prosecuting Joe Gamrat and anyone who assisted him in trying to end his wife's affair with Courser would be a waste of taxpayer money.

“None of the individuals involved in this matter come to the table with clean hands,” Turkelson said in a statement. “All bear some responsibility in creating this embarrassing and costly chapter in our county’s history.”

“Under these circumstances I see no benefit in prolonging this saga at the expense of Lapeer County taxpayers in a prosecution that would be tenuous at best. For these reasons I have declined criminal charges in connection with the extortion scandal. It is my hope that by closing this chapter Lapeer County can move forward and focus on more important issues facing our county and state.”

Courser has claimed his and Gamrat’s former House aides Keith Allard and Ben Graham were involved in supplying the anonymous texter with information used to track their movements, including a spring break trip Courser and Gamrat took together to Washington, D.C. when Courser was studying a run for Congress.

In a phone interview Sunday morning, Courser said the investigation showed Joe Gamrat and his best friend “were the principals” — with assistance from the former aides — in trying to pressure him and Cindy Gamrat to resign from office.

“He said there’s plenty of evidence that it’s very clear that the staff that you backed up with all of your stories was intimately involved in it,” Courser told The Detroit News. “Given the fact that it’s her husband and her husband’s best friend, he’s using his prosecutorial discretion in saying he’s not going to prosecute at this time.”

Joe Gamrat did not return a message Sunday seeking comment.

Courser has said the threatening messages caused him to distribute an anonymous fictional email about himself to fellow Republicans claiming he was caught having sex with a male prostitute behind a Lansing nightclub.

The email claimed Courser was a “bisexual porn addicted sex deviant” with an alcohol and drug problem.

Courser has said he sent the anonymous emails to fellow Republicans and reporters on May 20 and 21. He has said it was an effort to figure out whether Graham, Allard and former aide Josh Cline were involved in supplying information to the person trying to get he and Cindy Gamrat to resign quietly against their will.

But Courser never went to law enforcement about the extortion plot until after The Detroit News first reported Aug. 7 on the existence of a May 19 audio recording Graham made of Courser plotting the distribution of the email.

Courser called the email a “controlled burn” designed to “inoculate the herd” against any public revelation that he was carrying on a Capitol romance with Gamrat. Courser told Graham he wanted to create the appearance of a “smear campaign” against himself and Gamrat to create public sympathy in case the affair became public.

Graham refused to send the email on Courser’s behalf, saying he would not engage in a cover-up.

Courser confirmed Sunday he always suspected Joe Gamrat was involved in sending the text messages with the help of the former House employees.

The Michigan State Police turned over its investigation of the anonymous text messages to the Lapeer County prosecutor late last month. The Detroit News has a pending Freedom of Information Act request with the state police for a copy of the report.

Courser said the state police investigation would show the former aides were working at the behest of House Speaker Kevin Cotter’s office to oust him and Cindy Gamrat from office.

“The larger story is these bastards were involved from the beginning, had motivations, meeting secretly with the speaker’s office and handing off information to Joe Gamrat and his buddy,” Courser told The News.

Cotter, R-Mount Pleasant, has repeatedly denied there was a conspiracy to run Courser and Gamrat out of Lansing.

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